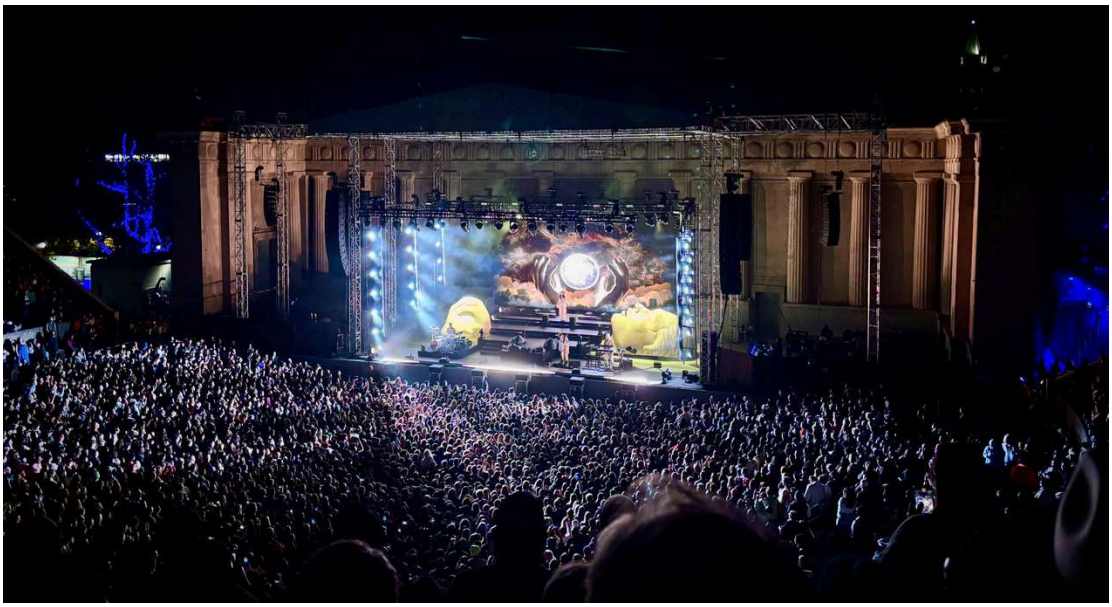
Empire of the Sun

Numismagram Newsletter #147 (V/2025)



It's May, which means that we're somehow 1/3 of the way through the year already. It also means that we have another update of new medals and tokens to our site. This past weekend, we had a chance to take in our first concert in what seems like forever. We were at the Greek Theatre in Berkeley for Empire of the Sun, with the show being full of energy, color, and numerous costume changes. The atmosphere at the Greek made it that much better, with the temperature being just right that evening.

Speaking of color, that brings us to the first item for this update—a gem late-19th century jeton from France…

This stunner radiates with tremendous iridescence across both sides, and is the finest of just four observed in the PCGS census, grading MS-65.

Since our last newsletter, one of the more globally important events was the death of Pope Francis, whose funeral was just completed and for whom the search for a successor will begin soon at the upcoming conclave. For this period of papal interregnum, the Church is in a transitional phase known as a *sede vacante*, Latin for "empty seat." This term doesn't get much usage outside of numismatics, where it is meant to convey that the issuing authority of coins and medals is not present. Though the upcoming conclave is not expected to last long, there have been such conclaves and *sede vacante* periods in the past that lasted numerous months to even more than a year or two. As such, the numismatic items issued during this interregnum did not bear the effigy or name of a pope; instead, they merely referenced the state that the Church was in. The next item in our update is one that is quite fitting for this upcoming event…

Issued in 1939 upon the election of a new pope, it celebrates the new reign of Pope Pius XII, who was elected on the third ballot on what was also his 63rd birthday. This particular conclave lasted just two days, making it the shortest in the 20th century. Being elected in 1939, however, meant that he would preside over the entirety of World War II, a conflict that constantly caused problems with the role of the Church in Europe and the world more broadly during times of global strife and division.

This upload also features a few items that have either a feeling of protest and defiance, or of satirizing those in positions of power. Protests to chaotic current events domestically have increased over the past month, with medals showing that these sentiments echo those in the past…

FRANCE. 45 Centimes Tax/Louis-Napoléon white metal Medal. Issued 1848/9 critiquing the events of 1848.

FINLAND. Revolutionary bronze Medal. Issued 1967. Commemorating the 50th anniversary of Finnish Independence from Russia. By Kauko Räsänen and struck by Kultateollisuus in Turku.

UNITED STATES & GREAT BRITAIN. "A Square Peg in an Oval Office..." aluminum Medal. Issued 2005. By James MaloneBeach for the British Art Medal Society.

Some of the other highlights in this upload include:

SWITZERLAND & GERMANY. Johann Georg Sulzer bronze Medal. Issued circa 1779 for the life of the professor of mathematics. By Abraham Abramson in Berlin. **NGC MS-64 Brown**.

PERFECIT · GREGORIVS · PAPA · XVI · ANNO · II · INCHOAVIT · V · PRINCIPATVS · SACRI · ROMANO · ASSV · TIBVR
PERFORATO · INVICTO · ANIENE · STRVATI · SEMITAM · CAPELLO · ANNO · DOMINI · MDCCCXXXV

ITALY. Papal States. Tivoli. Gregorian Tunnels/Aniene River Diversion bronze Medal. Issued 1835. Commemorating the massive earthworks project. By Carl Heinrich Lorenz.

GERMANY. Ferdinand Adolf Heinrich August Graf von Zeppelin cast iron Medal. Issued 1913 for his 75th birthday. By Karl Goetz in München.

For all of this upload's new items, please click **here** or on the banner art below. We'll be back again in two weeks for another group of museum-quality art, historical, and contemporary medals!

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